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Sustainable development: Convention on Biological Diversity

Oceans and the law of the sea

Letter dated 19 March 2013 from the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity addressed to the Secretary-General

At its eleventh meeting, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity adopted decision XI/17 entitled "Marine and coastal biodiversity: ecologically or biologically significant marine areas", which includes a section entitled "Description of areas meeting the scientific criteria for ecologically or biologically significant marine areas".

In paragraph 6 of the decision, the Conference of the Parties, noting that, in accordance with decision X/29, the application of the scientific criteria for ecologically or biologically significant marine areas is a scientific and technical exercise, and emphasizing that the identification of ecologically or biologically significant marine areas and the selection of conservation and management measures is a matter for States and competent intergovernmental organizations, in accordance with international law, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, as stated in paragraph 26 of decision X/29, requested the Executive Secretary to include the summary reports on the description of areas that meet the criteria for ecologically or biologically significant marine areas prepared by the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice at its sixteenth meeting and contained in the annex to the decision, in the repository, as referred to in decision X/29 and the decision, and, for the purpose set out in decision X/29, to submit them to the General Assembly, and particularly its Ad Hoc Open-ended Informal Working Group to study issues relating to the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction, as well as to submit them to Parties, other Governments and relevant international organizations. The Conference of the Parties further requested the Executive Secretary to submit the summary reports to the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole on the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects, as well as to provide them as a source of information to United Nations specialized agencies.

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Pursuant to the above-mentioned requests, I have the honour to inform you that the summary reports on the description of areas that meet the criteria for ecologically or biologically significant marine areas, which comprise tables 1 and 2 of the annex to decision XI/17, are available in all six official languages of the United Nations on the website of the Convention at http://www.cbd.int/decisions/cop/?m=cop-11. The other decisions referred to in decision XI/17 are also available on the website.

(*Signed*) Braulio **Ferreira de Souza Dias**
Executive Secretary
Convention on Biological Diversity